

Last year, I had the privilege of nominating 20 high school seniors for admission to one or more academies. Half of the young men and women that I nominated received admission to at least one service academy.

Calling each nominee in my district, as I am doing here, to tell them that they have been selected to these prestigious institutions was one of the most special moments of my freshman year in Congress. I hope to make many more phone calls this year. This is a picture of me calling Drew Polczynski last year to tell him he had been accepted to West Point.

If you are highly motivated, looking for a challenge in your life, and want to serve your country, I hope you will consider attending a U.S. Service Academy.

I will be hosting information sessions throughout my district this year. These sessions are a great opportunity for students to explore the possibility of attending one of several prominent academic institutions and meet with admissions representatives. I hope students and their family will attend these events throughout the Second Congressional District.

If you are interested in a congressional nomination, please contact my office in Charleston at (304) 925-5964, or my office in Martinsburg at (304) 264-8810, and ask for the individual who oversees academy applications.

HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN SYRIA

Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, this past weekend I met with members of the Syrian community in Charleston, West Virginia, to discuss ways that the Federal Government can help the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Syria. This is us meeting.

In particular, we discussed H.R. 5732, the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2016. The bill would hold Syrian human rights abusers accountable for their crimes. The bill would impose sanctions on individuals who do business with dictator al-Assad's brutal regime and would require the President to publish a list of people who are complicit in the grave human rights violations that have occurred and continue to unfold in Syria.

Despite promises and agreements to the contrary, chemical weapons are still being used regularly by the Assad regime in Syria. We cannot look the other way while innocent children are murdered.

I am a proud cosponsor of this critical bill, and I thank my colleagues, Congressman ELIOT ENGEL and Chairman ED ROYCE, for introducing it. I encourage the leadership here in the House to bring the bill to the floor for a vote immediately.

The innocent Syrian people have suffered enough. The current civil war has resulted in 4 million refugees and nearly 500,000 killed.

My mother fled Fidel Castro's Communist Cuba after being unjustly thrown in jail by Fidel Castro's tyrannical Communist regime. We must pro-

tect persecuted individuals who have no one to stand up for them.

ENSURING SAFETY, QUALITY, AND RELIABILITY FOR OUR VETERANS WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. COSTELLO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3471, the Veterans Mobility Safety Act, a bill I am proud to cosponsor. This legislation would set minimum standards for any individual or company installing or selling mobility products to veterans through a Department of Veterans Affairs equipment program.

These products are used by disabled veterans to increase their mobility and their overall quality of life, but the VA does not currently require vendors who make or repair the products to meet a certain level of certification. Standards in this legislation would help guarantee safety, quality, and reliability.

It is critical that our veterans who have given so much for our country have the best available equipment to accommodate any physical disability. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

SUPPLYING STUDENTS WITH SKILLS BUSINESSES NEED

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5587, the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, a bill I am proud to cosponsor; and I wish to recognize my colleague from Pennsylvania, G.T. Thompson, for his work on that bill.

This bipartisan legislation would provide State and local educators with greater control and flexibility with respect to career and technical education programs; and it takes an important step in closing the skills gap faced by American employers and manufacturers.

In order to succeed in the modern workforce, students need to emerge with the skills that State and local businesses need. The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act does just that, encouraging greater student involvement in work-based learning and, in the classroom, emphasizing the development of employability skills and the importance of attaining credentials.

As co-chair of the 21st Century Skills Caucus, I have been working on legislation with similar goals, and I am very proud to see provisions I have advocated for included in this bill.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

HALTING TAX INCREASES

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3590, the Halt Tax Increases on the Middle Class and Seniors Act. This legislation would put taxpayers' hard-

earned dollars back into their own pockets. It would lower the required percentage of income that must be spent to qualify for a tax deduction for medical costs.

Americans should be able to deduct high-cost medical expenses, and this legislation would reduce the required percentage from 10 percent to 7.5 percent of adjusted gross income.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill to provide middle class families and seniors with deserved tax relief, as they have already had to spend a significant amount of their income on these expenses.

□ 1045

RICHLAND BOROUGH CELEBRATES 100 YEARS

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Richland Borough, Lebanon County, of my district, on 110 years of incorporation.

On September 17, 1906, Richland became its own municipality, breaking from Millcreek Township, gaining its name from the fertile soil in the area.

Richland is home to the inventor of the air pump used by Henry Ford on the Model T and will celebrate this and the rest of its impressive history this weekend.

I wish to also recognize the Lebanon Daily News for a great article on the history of Richland Borough. Gary Althaus of the Richland Heritage Society and many others have been organizing a series of events that will take place this upcoming Saturday.

A little bit more brief history: August 9, 1906, the citizens of Richland held a public meeting on the subject of the advantages of a borough. On August 12, the plan was put in circulation, and by 11 p.m., it had 50 signatures. Then on August 16, 1906, Mr. Holstein took the petition to the county courthouse and presented it before the court, and on September 17, the presiding judge granted the charter. On February 25, 1907, the first Richland Borough Council meeting was organized at the Union House, which then became the place of many meetings, including borough council meetings thereafter.

Congratulations to Richland Borough and all its residents. I am very proud to represent you in the United States Congress.

CONGRATULATING DR. BILL HOGARTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. JOLLY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Dr. Bill Hogarth, a former director of our Nation's National Marine Fisheries Services. Dr. Hogarth recently retired as director of the Florida Institute of Oceanography based at the University of South Florida in St. Petersburg. Not only do I recognize Dr. Hogarth on his retirement, but also on two honors that he recently received.